

# Tie City/Happy Jack Winter Trails Meeting January 19 & 20, 2011

## Agenda

- Welcome, Introductions & Housekeeping
- Brief Presentation & Meeting Objectives
  - History, Uses and Issues Management
  - Recent Proposal and what we heard
  - Future –feasible solutions to help manage issues
- Listening Sessions
  - Validating Identified Issues/Solutions
  - Identification of other Potential Issues/Solutions
  - Question & Answer
  - Next Steps & Wrap Up



# Facts and Issues Management

- ▣ National Forests are Managed for Multiple Uses
  - Winter trails on Pole Mtn. currently allow dogs, snowshoes, walking, running, traditional skiing and skate skiing
- ▣ MBNA is permitted to groom select trails for races
  - A successful partnership that provides a service that the FS could not
  - They do not set policy and have no authority to enforce rules
- ▣ Issues in/around high use/demand areas are not new
  - Accessibility from population centers increases demand and pressure on Pole Mtn. for many competing uses (e.g. horses vs bikes vs ATVs, etc)
  - Groomed trails have increased popularity and demand
- ▣ Emerging issues can be addressed with rules that can include restricting certain uses (outright, or limited timing or locations)

# ***Our Original Proposal***

In October of 2010, the Forest Service solicited comments on the following proposal for the Tie City ski trails and the Happy Jack Recreation Area:

- ▣ Dogs will be allowed on all ski trails Sundays through Wednesdays only. Dogs will not be allowed on trails Thursdays, Fridays, and Saturdays.
- ▣ Dogs will not be allowed on ski trails during scheduled race events, regardless of the day of the week.

# Public Issues

## *What We Heard...*

- ▣ MBNA has too much control (i.e. too much grooming and restrictions); the groomed trails expand each year forcing skiers not wanting groomed trails into other or less desirable areas
- ▣ There are too many people at varying skill levels, all wanting different experiences
- ▣ There are too many people and dogs trying to squeeze onto a trail system from one central point, particularly during race events; there just aren't enough trailheads on Pole Mountain
- ▣ Some skiers act like they own the area
- ▣ I need to be able to take my dogs with me for my activity (skijoring)
- ▣ Dogs are only a problem at the trailhead / parking lot
- ▣ The Forest Service has no hard data to support the concern over dogs
- ▣ I don't like to ski through dog poop
- ▣ The dog ban would eliminate skier security when recreating alone
- ▣ Dogs can create fear in other skiers when they run up to greet them
- ▣ The proposed prohibitions cannot be effectively enforced; enforce the existing rules before implementing new ones

# Public Solutions

## *What We Heard...*

- ▣ Implement the original proposal
- ▣ Only allow dogs on certain trails or at certain trailheads
- ▣ Limit dog use on Saturdays only
- ▣ Allow dogs in the early mornings and late afternoons only
- ▣ Require dogs to remain under leash control, especially at trailheads and other high use areas
- ▣ Cooperate with pet stores to get hands-free leashes
- ▣ Educate dog owners about their responsibilities; educate skiers in general about their responsibilities as recreationists
- ▣ Create additional trailheads and trails; create more non-groomed trail opportunities
- ▣ Implement an “Adopt a Trail” program for groups to police different trails for poop and/or out of control dogs
- ▣ Implement a “three strikes” policy – after three infractions, your dog is no longer allowed at the area
- ▣ Implement a dog registration program; charge additional fees
- ▣ Provide additional bags and depositories for dog poop
- ▣ Get rid of poop bags; they’re a waste of landfill space. Instead, ask people to remove the waste from the trail
- ▣ Provide increased signage explaining area rules and regulations
- ▣ Increase area law enforcement

# Feasible Solutions to Help Manage Issues

- ▣ FS does not want to go to extremes > solutions that reduce conflicts, are enforceable, reasonable and timely
  - Dogs restricted on specific days and/or events
  - Dogs restricted to leashes in designated areas, particularly high use/concentration areas
  - Dogs restricted to specific trailheads
  - Nordic Center managed similar to Ski Areas?
  - Others??? – For the listening sessions
  - Solution(s) will not necessarily be based on popular opinion
- ▣ Education is essential to success in high use/demand areas
  - Dog owners must be responsible
  - All users must be respectful and tolerant of others uses and users on public lands
  - FS will work to educate diverse recreation users of existing and future rules (PSA's, signing, etc.)
  - Other areas on the LRD provide quality skiing and snowshoeing opportunities